

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ROME 01146 231416Z

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 1146

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IT

SUBJ: REACTIONS TO CIA DISCLOSURES

REF: MILAN 0113

1. TOO EARLY TO JUDGE IMPACT OF CIA DISCLOSURES ON USIS PROGRAMMING AND CONTACTS. POST HAS OBSERVED, NATURALLY, INTENSE AWARENESS BY ITALIAN CONTACTS, CONCERN THAT MORE DISCLOSURES IMPEND, BUT MIXED PATTERN OF RESPONSES TO SITUATION.

2. SEVERAL INCIDENTS, PROBABLY MORE THAN CAN BE ACCOUNTED FOR BY COINCIDENCE, ILLUSTRATE EITHER INCREASED CAUTION IN DEALING WITH US OR WILLINGNESS TO USE DISCLOSURES AS EXCUSE FOR CAUTION WHICH REALLY HAS OTHER BASES. FILM CLUB DIRECTOR BACKED OUT OF EVENT WHICH WOULD HAVE ASSOCIATED HIS CLUB WITH USIS, GIVING DISCLOSURES AS HIS REASON. (HE IS, HOWEVER, GOING THROUGH WITH ALREADY-SCHEDULED LECTURES UNDER OUR AEGIS.) SPEAKING PROGRAM FOR AMERICAN LABOR SPECIALIST SEEMED ABNORMALLY DIFFICULT TO ARRANGE, WITH STRONG ANTAGONISTIC REACTION FROM HEAD OF CISL (CD LABOR CONFEDERATION) SCHOOL IN FLORENCE (ATTRIBUTED TO ANTAGONISM TO GEORGE MEANY BY ROME CISL OFFICE), AND PSI CHIEF IN TURIN CANCELLED SPECIALIST'S ENGAGEMENT, ARRANGED SEVERAL WEEKS EARLIER, AT PSI-ORIENTED CLUB. ATTITUDE OF ROME MAYOR'S OFFICE IN DEALINGS ON AMERICAN INDIAN EXHIBIT WAS NOTABLY COOL INVOLVING EVEN DIFFICULTIES IN REACHING OLD, FAMILIAR CONTACTS BY
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PAGE 02 ROME 01146 231416Z

PHONE. FINALLY, APPARENT OPPOSITION OF CHIEF ADMINISTRATOR

OF IMPORTANT EXHIBIT SPACE UNDER GENERAL CONTROL OF ROME CITY HALL (INVOLVING SAME TROUBLE IN CARRYING OUT EVEN NORMALLY-SIMPLE CONTACTS) MAY HAVE BEEN DUE TO ATMOSPHERE CAUSED BY DISCLOSURES OR BY THEIR EMBARRASSMENT AT GENERAL DISORGANIZATION AND UNDER-FINANCING OF THEIR PART OF CITY ADMINISTRATION. BREAK-IN REPORT (REFTEL) MAY HAVE BEEN, POLICE OPINED, POLITICALLY MOTIVATED, BUT NO STRONG EVIDENCE OF THIS. LIBRARY ATTENDANCE REMAINS SAME.

3. USIS ROME PRESS OFFICE SEES SEVERAL SIGNS OF RELUCTANCE TO DEAL WITH US. ONE JOURNALIST EXPLAINED REFUSAL TO COME TO USIS TO PICK UP PRESIDENT'S BUDGET MESSAGE (PROPOSING COFFEE BAR RENDEZVOUS) THUS "IT IS NOT A GOOD TIME TO BE SEEN AROUND THE EMBASSY." NEW ANSA (THE MAJOR ITALIAN WIRE SERVICE) DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT DID NOT WANT TO COME IN FOR INTRODUCTIONS "UNTIL THINGS SETTLE DOWN." TOP USIS ITALIAN PRESS ASSISTANT, MEMBER OF PRESS GUILD, HEARD FROM SEVERAL FELLOW-MEMBERS THAT IT WOULD NOW BE MORE DIFFICULT TO DEAL WITH AMERICANS, ESPECIALLY DUE THEIR "INABILITY TO KEEP A SECRET", AN OPINION ECHOED BY CHIEF PRESS OFFICER AT QUIRINALE.

4. POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS PROBABLY EXIST FOR SEVERAL INCIDENTS, BUT ACCUMULATION IS NOTABLE. ITALIAN GOVERNMENT CRISIS HAS UNDOUBTEDLY ALTERED BEHAVIOR AND MUDDIED SIGNALS.

5. ON OTHER HAND, SOME WHO HAVE TALKED OPENLY ABOUT DISCLOSURES HAVE SYMPATHIZED AND HAVE ASKED SUCH QUESTIONS, WITH CLEAR GENUINE CONCERN, AS "ARE YOU GOING TO PULL THOSE PEOPLE OUT OR ARE THEY GETTING POLICE PROTECTION?"

6. TWO OFFICERS, INCLUDING CULTURAL ATTACHE, HAVE RECEIVED STRONG EXPRESSIONS OF REGRET AND UNHAPPINESS OVER DISCLOSURES, WITH FERVENT ADMONITION, SPECIALLY RE US CULTURAL PRESENCE: "YOU MUST WORK HARDER."VOLPE

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